

END-OF-COURSE TEST

Listening 1

Speaker 1 I cycle to work every day. I used to drive, but I got fed up with all the traffic. I was getting to work in a very stressed-out state every day and it wasn't doing me any good. So I decided to ditch the car and take up cycling. I've never regretted it. I've got a really good bike and I put on my cycling gear every morning and rather enjoy my journey to work. It keeps me fit and of course it's much quicker. As I whizz past all the motorists in the terrible queues, I must admit I think, 'You fools!' They all look so miserable and frustrated. They're all worried they're going to be late, just like I used to. It's a terrible way to start each day and of course you end it that way too. Now I'm home much earlier than I used to be as well.

Speaker 2 I get the train to work every day, like lots of the other people who work where I do. Most people complain about the rail service here, and someone's late every day because their train was delayed or cancelled. And the trains are usually very overcrowded, too. Lots of people spend an hour or so packed in with loads of other people – they have to stand all the way there and all the way back because they can't get a seat. That's awful, but fortunately I don't have any of that. Not that many people commute into the city from where I live so I always get a seat and, actually, I rather enjoy the journeys. I can read, maybe do a bit of work in preparation for that day, or just sit and think. It gives me some breathing space.

Speaker 3 I get the bus to work because it's not that far from where I live and the buses come very regularly. I quite like travelling by bus, but the problem is that I can never be quite sure how it's gonna turn out. I started off getting the bus at a certain time and it was fine, but then there were all sorts of roadworks and other delays and I turned up late quite a few times. So then I started getting an earlier one and that was fine for a while, but even that one got me there a bit late. Then I started leaving even earlier and sometimes I got to work before everyone else and had to wait around! It's so hard to judge because the journey time varies so much on different days. Some days there's not much traffic and it goes quickly; other days there are all sorts of hold-ups and it takes ages.

Speaker 4 I walk to work every day, even though it takes me about an hour. I work on the opposite side of the city from where I live and you wouldn't think it would be much of a problem to do that by public transport, but actually it is. I tried buses and trains, but I had to change from one to the other so many times that it took about an hour and I got fed up with all the hassle. So I started walking and I really like it. I can take all sorts of interesting routes – my favourite is the walk along the canal. I get to see bits of the city that other commuters never see. It's much better than being stuck on a bus or a train and of course it's very good exercise. So I started doing it because it seemed like the only sensible thing to do and now I'm really glad things have turned out that way.

Speaker 5 I drive to work every day. I could take the train and it's possible that would be quicker, but it's quite a long walk from the station to my office so I prefer to drive and park at the office. Door to door it takes about an hour, and most of that is spent in gridlocked traffic. The congestion is terrible and I start my day in jams, inching forward bit by bit. If there was no traffic, that journey would take about ten minutes! Lots of people hate that sort of thing, but I don't mind it. I quite like sitting in the car – I have the radio on and listen to the news or sometimes I have some music on, and I find the journey quite relaxing. I leave home in plenty of time, and I expect to get stuck in traffic, so I don't get frustrated or stressed.

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Listening 2

Interviewer If someone says to you 'I'm an artist', do you know exactly what that means? Does it necessarily mean that they're making their living from the art they make, that it's their full-time job, that people buy what they produce, that their work features in exhibitions? My guest is artist Sophia Pearce, who has her own views on this. Sophia, what do you think is required for someone to consider themselves an artist?

Artist It's about your attitude to your art as much as anything else. Even if you aren't actually making a living from it, even if you've got a job in a completely different field, you can still think of yourself as being first and foremost an artist. If creating art is your greatest passion in life, the centre of your own sense of your identity, then in my opinion, you're an artist.

Interviewer But how does that work in practical terms?

Artist Well, if your sense of yourself revolves around your ability to create art, you must put it first in all aspects of your life. First of all, tell people 'I'm an artist', don't say things like 'I'm artistic' or 'I'd like to be an artist' or 'I have a full-time job but I like to paint'. Don't say 'I work in advertising' or 'I'm an accountant' or whatever your job is, say 'I'm an artist'. Nobody will take you seriously as an artist unless you say that's what you are.

Interviewer But what if having a job means you don't have much time for your art?

Artist You have to set aside a lot of time outside work to be creative. Otherwise you'll go mad! Don't work any more hours in your job than you have to, or maybe change to working part-time. Even if you're not making much money from it, art has to be a real occupation for you. Other work has to come second.

Interviewer If you're putting art first, how does that affect your personal relationships?

Artist You have to put it first or you won't be any good to anyone. You'll be frustrated, unhappy, resentful, and no fun to be around. Tell friends and family that you need to spend a lot of your time working on your art instead of socializing or being with them. Don't be defensive about this. Just make it clear that you take your art seriously and need time to do it. They'll develop a respect for your commitment and they'll realize how important being creative is to you.

Interviewer Sounds like a rather lonely existence, though.

Artist It doesn't have to be. You should get involved in the community of artists where you are. Go to art events, join organizations, meet other artists. If you spend time with like-minded people, you'll feel encouraged and it will confirm for you that you're part of a world of people doing something entirely valid. And it will provide you with contacts and information that might help you to sell your work, and lead to opportunities you might otherwise not know about.